

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5443

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 20, 1997

Title: An act relating to the advanced technology research initiative.

Brief Description: Adopting the advanced technology research initiative.

Sponsors: Senators Horn, Wood, Jacobsen, Kohl, Prince, Bauer, West, Finkbeiner, Sheldon and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/6/97, 2/10/97, 2/20/97 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 3/5/97.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5443 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wood, Chair; Winsley, Vice Chair; Bauer, Hale, Kohl, Patterson, Prince and Sheldon.

Staff: Jennifer Hanlon (786-7784)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Michael Groesch (786-7434)

Background: In 1983, the Legislature created the Washington Technology Center (WTC) to form a university-industry-government partnership to conduct commercially applicable research. The WTC is headquartered at the University of Washington and is administered by an independent board appointed by the Governor.

In 1992, the Legislature modified the mission of the WTC. The Legislature required the WTC to perform and commercialize research on a statewide basis that benefits the intermediate and long-term economic vitality of the state. The WTC also had to develop and strengthen university-industry relationships through conducting research that primarily benefits Washington-based companies.

The Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute was established in 1989 to develop and promote projects that advance the transfer and commercialization of technology. The institute is governed by the Joint Center for Higher Education in Spokane.

The Office of Technology Transfer at the University of Washington, the WTC, the Washington Research Foundation, and the Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology

Institute work with the transfer of technology from the university to the marketplace. It is felt by participants in those programs that state investments which stimulate advanced technology research initiatives create the growth of new industries and foster the creation of high-wage jobs.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Advanced technology research initiatives and matching funds for federal research grant opportunities are established.

The advanced research initiative is a research group headed by a senior, full professor who has engaged in internationally known advanced technology research and has strong links to private industry. Initially, each advanced technology research initiative must have one full professor and two associate professors who have internationally recognized research credentials in an area of advanced technology. Students are included in the research process.

Funds received are targeted toward enhancing the development of existing or emerging Washington advanced technology industries. Funds allocated for federal grant initiative are solely to help obtain new grants and contracts that facilitate the development of specific Washington industries.

Each university is responsible for providing facilities, infrastructure, and other support necessary for the ongoing success of the advanced technology research initiatives. The universities are encouraged to seek private sector contributions and federal grant funding for these initiatives.

An advanced technology advisory committee is established with a majority of members from private industry. The committee advises the institutions on implementing the initiatives.

Universities report to appropriate legislative committees by January 1, 1999, regarding their progress. The report must include information on the faculty recruited for the initiatives, the research performed, the patents applied for, and any federal grants received.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Institutions are required to include students in the research process. Reporting requirements are expanded to include information regarding recruited faculty, research projects, federal grants received, and patent revenue.

Appropriation: \$9,000,000.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For (Higher Education): A new breed of faculty researchers understand technology transfer and commercialization of intellectual property. The Advanced Technology Initiative is needed to build and sustain a Washington economy. The role of the university is to enhance resources to serve the personnel, research, and technology transfer needs of Washington's high technology industries. The initiative will enable Washington to be competitive in providing goods and services to the global marketplace.

Testimony Against: This program is an illogical extension of the university's role. Universities should focus on academic rather than industrial goals. There is no evidence that these businesses would go elsewhere without university involvement. This is corporate welfare without requirements for assessment or accountability. Programs like this create a division among faculty of the haves and have-nots.

Testified: PRO: Dr. Robert Miller, UW; Tom Ranken, Washington Biotech/Biomedical Association; Dr. William Ragburn, WSU; CON: Todd Fedorenko, Coalition for a Livable Washington; Professor Philip Bereano, Institute for Washington's Future.

Testified (Ways & Means): PRO: Enid Layes, UW; Dr. Robert Miller, UW; Bob Smith, WSU.